

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-03 SP-02 NSAE-00 H-01 EB-04 /038 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/NE:RSTHOMPSON:LP
APPROVED BY C:MNIMETZ
EUR/NE:RLFUNSETH
-----013178 091620Z /47

R 091356Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMCONSUL BELFAST
INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 200882

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, UK, EI, US

SUBJECT: MEETING OF COUNSELOR NIMETZ WITH REVEREND MARTIN
SMYTH

1. SUMMARY: THE COUNSELOR MET AUGUST 4 WITH REVEREND
MARTIN SMYTH, GRAND MASTER OF THE ORANGE ORDER IN NORTHERN
IRELAND AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE OFFICIAL UNIONIST PARTY.
THE COUNSELOR NOTED THE US POLICY OF NON-INVOLVEMENT COUPLED
WITH CONCERN AND HOPE FOR A SOLUTION. REVEREND SMYTH SUP-
PORTED THE UNIONIST STANCE FAVORING CONTINUED LINKS WITH
THE UK AND RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ELECTED NORTHERN IRELAND
GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE COUNSELOR NOTED THE USG IS NOT INVOLVED IN THE PRO-
BLEMS OF NORTHERN IRELAND (NI) BUT MANY AMERICANS ARE
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INTERESTED. WE KEEP INFORMED AND HOPE THE PROBLEMS OF NI
CAN BE RESOLVED.

3. SMYTH RESPONDED THAT IN FIFTY YEARS NI WILL STILL BE IN
THE UK, AND EVENTS SINCE 1968 HAVE SET BACK ANY PROSPECT OF
EVOLUTION TOWARD A UNITED IRELAND. SECURITY WILL CONTINUE
TO IMPROVE, ALTHOUGH A SMALL NUMBER CAN KEEP TERRORISM

GOING. HE REJECTED THE IDEA THAT CATHOLIC CONFIDENCE IN

THE POLICE WAS A PROBLEM, WHILE STATING THAT AT ONE POINT THE MASS OF CATHOLICS HAD BEEN CAUGHT UP IN AN ORGANIZED EFFORT TO UNDERMINE LEGALITY. THE RECENT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT WAS PART OF AN EFFORT TO VILIFY THE RUC.

4. THE COUNSELOR NOTED THAT CATHOLIC LEADERS FEAR IF THERE IS NO PROGRESS IN A YEAR OR SO THE VIOLENCE WILL INCREASE, SO AFTER THE BRITISH ELECTION THEY HOPE FOR MORE PROGRESS. SMYTH REJOINED THAT GREATER VIOLENCE WAS POSSIBLE, BUT CATHOLICS HAVE SUFFERED THE MOST AND WILL RESTRAIN THE GROWTH OF MINORITY PARAMILITARIES. ANY NEW BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO TAKE SOME POLITICAL INITIATIVE. WE MUST GET BACK TO THE GRADUAL PROCESS WHICH WAS TAKING PLACE BEFORE STORMONT WAS PROROGUED, AND EVEN THE MINORITY WOULD REALLY PREFER STORMONT TO WESTMINSTER. ULTIMATELY THERE MUST BE A DEVOLVED ASSEMBLY AS IN SCOTLAND AND WALES. IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD ACT SUCH A GOVERNMENT COULD BE IN PLACE BY THE SPRING OF 1979. IT WOULD BE THE FINAL BLOW FOR THE PROVOS, PERHAPS AFTER A BRIEF SPLURGE, BECAUSE THEIR OVERTHROW OF STORMONT WOULD BE REVERSED AND THERE WOULD BE NO PROSPECT OF A UNITED IRELAND IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. CATHOLICS WOULD PARTICIPATE TO AVOID LOSING POLITICAL CREDIBILITY AND BECAUSE THEY NEED PAY-CHECKS, BUT THE BRITISH MUST PRESENT A WORKABLE PLAN UNDER CONFIDENTIAL

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WHICH CATHOLICS WOULD NOT LOSE TOO MUCH FACE.

5. SMYTH WAS CRITICAL OF SECRETARY OF STATE ROY MASON'S POLITICAL EFFORTS, SAYING ANY PARTY THAT ACCEPTED HIS PROPOSALS WOULD OPEN ITSELF TO ATTACK, HENCE NO PARTY CAN APPROVE THEM. (THE IMPLICATION OF SMYTH'S REMARK WAS THAT THE BRITISH MUST IMPOSE A SOLUTION RATHER THAN SEEKING AGREEMENT AMONG PARTIES.)

6. SMYTH ASKED ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE "IRISH CAUCUS". THE COUNSELOR REPLIED THAT LEADERS LIKE SENATOR KENNEDY, SPEAKER O'NEILL AND GOVERNOR CAREY REPRESENT THE MAINSTREAM OF IRISH-AMERICAN THINKING, BUT IF THE SITUATION APPEARS TO DETERIORATE OTHERS WILL GAIN STRENGTH AND PRESS THE MODERATES.

7. SMYTH EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE US POSITION ON NI, BUT COMMENTED PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT WAS WIDELY INTERPRETED IN NI TO MEAN THE US SHOULD REMAIN ON THE SIDELINES AND THEN GIVE ECONOMIC AID IF THERE WAS A SETTLEMENT. THE COUNSELOR REPLIED THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT WAS CERTAINLY NOT INTENDED TO DISCOURAGE INVESTMENT,

AND WE ARE GLAD NI IS HAVING SOME SUCCESS. THERE WERE FEARS OF ADVERSE RESULTS OF A SETTLEMENT, AND WE WERE JUST TRYING TO SAY WE WOULD BE HELPFUL AT THAT TIME. WE ARE

MAKING NO EFFORT TO FORCE A SETTLEMENT BUT RATHER WISHED TO ENCOURAGE THE PARTIES INVOLVED.

8. (IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH DEPTOFF SMYTH SAID A POSSIBLE ARRANGEMENT FOR DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT WOULD BE TO REQUIRE APPROVAL OF ANY PROPOSED CABINET BY A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY, THUS GIVING THE MINORITY A VETO, AND EQUAL SHARING OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION. SMYTH SAID UNDER SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO SEE GOVERNMENT BY AN SDLP/
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ALLIANCE COALITION IN FIVE TO TEN YEARS, WITH POLITICAL LINES DRAWN ON A SOCIAL RATHER THAN SECTARIAN BASIS.)

9. COMMENT: SMYTH VISITED WASHINGTON AUGUST 2-4 AT THE BEGINNING OF A THREE-WEEK VISIT WHICH WILL INCLUDE ATTENDANCE AT THE BIENNIAL MEETING IN PITTSBURGH OF THE US ORANGE ORDER. SENATOR EAGLETON HOSTED A LUNCH AUGUST 3 WHICH INCLUDED SENATORS CASE, DECONCINI, ICHORD, MCINTYRE, NELSON, PELL AND SPARKMAN. THAT AFTERNOON HE SAW CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ, AND THAT EVENING MET STAFF MEMBERS OF THE US CATHOLIC CONFERENCE AT DINNER. LUNCH WITH JOURNALISTS AUGUST 4 REPORTEDLY PRODUCED A LIVELY AND USEFUL DISCUSSION. (SMYTH ALSO MET SENATOR KENNEDY AUGUST 3 WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THE FACT THE MEETING HAD TAKEN PLACE WOULD BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE. THE EXCHANGE REPORTEDLY WAS COURTEOUS BUT WITHOUT MUCH SUBSTANCE.) NEWSOM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, PARTY LEADERS, SELFGOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE200882
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RSTHOMPSON:LP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780326-0023
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780882/aaaacqkp.tel
Line Count: 152
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c2dfea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1790808
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING OF COUNSELOR NIMETZ WITH REVEREND MARTIN SMYTH
TAGS: PINT, PINS, UK, EI, US, (SMYTH, MARTIN), (NIMETZ)
To: BELFAST
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c2dfea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014